

# Glossary of Terms

## **ARRA:**

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation and invest in critical sectors, including education. The ARRA laid the foundation for education reform by supporting investments in innovative strategies that are most likely to lead to improved results for students, long-term gains in school and school system capacity, and increased productivity and effectiveness. The ARRA provides \$4.35 billion for the Race to the Top funds.

## **APPR:**

The Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) is the process by which New York State teachers and principals are evaluated on a yearly basis. In 2010, New York State adopted a new teacher evaluation law, Education Law §3012-c, which establishes a new “statewide comprehensive evaluation system for classroom teachers and building principals based on multiple measures of effectiveness.” Under the new system, each principal and teacher will receive an annual professional performance review, resulting in a single composite effectiveness score and rating of highly effective, effective, developing or ineffective. The composite score is determined as follows: 20 percent of a teacher’s evaluation is based on student growth on a state assessment or other comparable measure; 20 percent is based on student achievement on other locally selected measures; and 60 percent is based on locally negotiated evidence of teacher effectiveness.

## **CCSS:**

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is a U.S. education initiative that seeks to bring diverse state curricula into alignment with each other by following the principles of standards-based education reform. The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers sponsor the initiative.

## **CCLS:**

The P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for English language arts and literacy and the P-12 Common Core Learning Standards for mathematics replaced the former NYS standards in those subject areas. The Board of Regents adopted the new P-12 CCLS for ELA and literacy and mathematics in January 2011 by adopting the CCSS and adding several components, specific to New York.

## **EDUCATION DATA PORTAL:**

The Education Data Portal (EDP) is now called the EngageNY Portal. Educators, students and parents/guardians will access the portal through EngageNY.org. The EngageNY portal will provide a secure content management system, collaboration platform and dashboard reports so that educators, students and

families can access and analyze educational data, make decisions and take actions to improve student outcomes. For the first time, teachers and parents will be able to view achievement and other instructional information using a state-supported system. School personnel will have much quicker access to educational records as students move between P-12 programs and districts.

## **ESEA later known as NCLB:**

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed in 1965 as part of the “War on Poverty.” ESEA emphasized equal access to education and established high standards and accountability. In 2002, Congress amended ESEA and reauthorized it as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

## **PARCC:**

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a consortium of 18 states plus the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers.

PARCC states have committed to building a K-12 assessment system that:

- Builds a pathway to college and career readiness for all students.
- Creates high-quality assessments that measure the full range of the Common Core State Standards.
- Supports educators in the classroom.
- Makes better use of technology in assessments.
- Advances accountability at all levels.

## **RTTT:**

The Race to the Top Initiative provides funds to states that have demonstrated success in raising student achievement and have the best plans to accelerate their reforms in the future. These reforms focus on education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers; and implementing ambitious plans in four core education reform areas:

- Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy.
- Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction.
- Recruiting, developing, rewarding and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most.
- Turning around our lowest-achieving schools.



## *The Facts About CCSS and Other Important Education Topics*

Perhaps now more than ever, it is essential that educators, teachers, parents and community residents share the same understanding about the changes and challenges taking place in education in New York State. Much has been reported and discussed about the way in which students are being educated through the introduction of the Common Core State Standards and the impact on student assessments and teacher evaluations. In order to effectively lead and participate in meaningful discussions, it is imperative that everyone share the same understanding of the topics being discussed.

## *Where Did It All Start?*

Several years ago, the federal government introduced Race to the Top (RTTT) as a national initiative to improve education. Race to the Top is a \$4.35 billion U.S. Department of Education contest created to spur innovation and reforms in state and local school district education in grades K-12. It is funded by the ED Recovery Act as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and was announced by President Barack Obama and then Secretary of Education Arne Duncan on July 24, 2009.

States were awarded points for satisfying

certain educational policies, such as performance-based standards often referred to as an Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) for teachers and principals, complying with Common Core Standards, lifting caps on charter schools, turning around the lowest-performing schools, and building data systems.

New York State applied for these funds and was awarded \$700 million to comply with these initiatives. Out of that came major changes in the NYS Regents Reform Agenda to implement the promises made to the U.S. Department of Education.

# DISPELLING THE MYTHS BY KNOWING THE FACTS

## Common Core Standards

### COMMON CORE LEARNING STANDARDS

*Myth:*  
These standards amount to a national curriculum for our schools.

**FACT:**  
Prior to the Common Core Learning Standards, New York State developed its own Standards which all schools and teachers were required to follow. The new Common Core Learning Standards were designed to serve as a consistent set of expectations defining what students should learn and be able to do. They were developed to increase clarity among educators and parents about what students should be able to know and do at each grade level.

The New York State Board of Regents adopted the NYS P-12 CCLS in January 2011. The New York State P-12 CCLS were implemented in New York State schools at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year.

### CURRICULUM MODULES

*Myth:*  
New York State has demanded that teachers follow scripted "curriculum modules."

**FACT:**  
The New York State Education Department has developed curriculum modules consistent with the CCLS as a free resource for school districts. Districts have the option of adopting these modules, adapting them to integrate with their current practices and curricula, or not using them at all. The selection and adoption of curricula remains a local decision.

### TEACHING TO THE TEST

**Myth:**  
Common Core assessments require teaching to the test.

**FACT:**  
The Department of Education has advised school districts against rote test prep practices. Rote test prep is a disservice to students and a waste of taxpayer funds. The best preparation for state assessments is a great teacher providing effective instruction.

### INCREASED ASSESSMENTS

*Myth:*  
The adoption of the CCLS has increased the amount of assessments students take.

**FACT:**  
Since the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), federal law requires the following assessments:

- Grades 3-8 English language arts and mathematics exams
- At least one science exam in grades 3-5, 6-9 and 10-12
- At least one high school ELA and mathematics exam
- Additional assessments for English language learners
- Additional assessments for students with severe disabilities

There are only two required state tests that are not federal mandates\*:

- Regents exam in U.S. History and Government
  - Regents exam in Global History and Geography
- \* Some students may also be required to participate in field testing.

Optional:

- State tests for advanced diploma and coursework purposes
  - Additional Regents exams in mathematics and science
  - Locally selected interim, periodic and benchmark assessments
  - Locally selected summative assessments
- \* Locally developed or third-party assessment is required for APPR purposes for teachers of grades 6-7 science and grades 6-8 social studies only.

As the new Common Core State Standards are fully implemented, the assessments will better reflect classroom instruction and student learning.

### PARCC

*Myth:* New York State has agreed to adopt PARCC.

**FACT:**  
New York State is the governing state in the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC). The Board of Regents is still considering whether or not to adopt the PARCC assessments for New York State. PARCC is scheduled to have computer-based assessments that measure the Common Core State Standards in ELA and mathematics in grades 3-11.

### OPTING TO OPT OUT

*Myth:*  
As a parent, I can opt my children out of assessments.

**FACT:**  
NCLB requires that all students must be assessed. This is defined as 95 percent of students tested within

specific subgroups of students. All districts are legally required to administer the assessments and cannot approve nor endorse an opt-out. Districts not meeting their 95 percent rate could incur sanctions including the loss of federal aid.

### DATA SHARING

*Myth:*  
Implementation of the Common Core means my child's data will be shared.

**FACT:**  
Common Core is not a mechanism for federal data collection. Common Core does not authorize the sharing of student data between states. Virtually all school districts, in New York State and around the country, already contract with third-party providers and/or vendors to provide software services necessary for instructional programs and management operations. This includes educational software services for student enrollment and attendance, school schedules, report cards and transcripts, school lunch and transportation, coordination of special education services, online learning and emergency parent notification. Service contracts are required to be in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and include all necessary state and federal data security and privacy protections.

There is no provision for parents to opt out of student data systems that are consistent with FERPA, such as the EngageNY portal. If parents were to opt their children out of these systems, everything from course scheduling to transportation to school lunches to high school transcripts for college applications would be impacted.